

REMARKS

Claims 4, 7-11, 13, 15 and 19-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 4 and 7 are amended and claims 1-2 and 5-6 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter disclosed therein. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 4, 7-11, 13, 15 and 19-22 contain allowable subject matter. Claim 4 is amended into independent form and is therefore allowable.

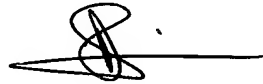
The Office Action objects to claim 7 because of informalities. Claim 7 is amended to overcome the objection. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claim 7 be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-2 and 5-6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Shirayanagi (U.S. Patent No. 6,419,549). Applicant asserts that the cancellation of claims 1-2 and 5-6 renders moot their rejection. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 4, 7-11, 13, 15 and 19-22 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Tarik M. Nabi
Registration No. 55,478

JAO:TMN/tje

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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